

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-5, 7-9, 11-13, 15, 17, and 18-22 are pending in this application. Claims 2, 6, 10, 14, and 16 are canceled by the present response without prejudice. Claims 19-22 are added by the present response. No new matter is believed to be added.

Claims 1-8 and 10-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. patent 4,618,150 to Kimura. Claims 9 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kimura in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/0236118 A1 to Okada (herein "Okada '118").

Addressing the above-noted rejections, those rejections are traversed by the present response.

Initially, applicants note the claims are amended by the present response to clarify features recited therein. Particularly, independent claim 1 now clarifies that the backlight is set in "an end portion of" the front display unit and further operates to "light up the front side display unit". The other independent claims recites similar features. The claim features are believed to clearly distinguish over the applied art.

The Office Action recognizes that Kimura "fails to explicitly teach a backlight that is set in the front side display unit in order to light up the symbols displayed by the variable display unit"¹. To overcome that deficiency recognized in Kimura, the Office Action takes "official notice that backlights are well known in gaming/slot machines to facilitate the viewing of displayed symbols on wheels during game play"². Further, with respect to that feature, the Office Action states the "Examiner supports the position of the Official Action taken with previously cited reference to Takemoto (962). The motivation for use of backlights in the windows of Kimura would be for clear viewing of the displays at the front

¹ Office Action of November 22, 2004, the sentence bridging pages 2-3.

² Office Action of November 22, 2004, page 3, lines 6-8.

end of unit”.³ In that respect, the Office Action now appears to additionally cite the teachings in U.S. patent 5,890,962 to Takemoto.

First, applicants traverse the outstanding rejection as it is not clear if the rejection is based on a combination of teachings of Kimura and Takemoto, particularly with respect to the noted motivation to combine such teachings.

However, in any respect applicants submit neither Kimura nor Takemoto teach or suggest the claimed feature of a backlight set in an end portion of the front side display unit to enable more clear viewing of both symbols displayed on reels and images displayed on the front side display unit, as clarified in the claims. Applicants further submit it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to set a backlight in such an end portion of the front side display unit because an installation location of a backlight is changed according to an installation location of a unit on which an object to be lit up is displayed. The claim features are directed to a gaming apparatus that enables more clear viewing of both symbols displayed on reels and images displayed on a front side display unit.⁴

In a non-limiting example noted in Figures 2, 3, and 36 in the present specification, the above-noted benefits in the present invention are achieved by utilizing a gaming apparatus including three spinning wheels 3L, 3C, and 3R configured to variably display a plurality of symbols, a panel display unit 5 located in front of the three spinning wheels 3L, 3C, 3R, and a cold cathode fluorescent lamp 2e set in an end portion of the panel display unit 5 to light up both the symbols and the panel display unit 5.⁵

In contrast to the claimed invention, Kimura discloses lamps 24-26 used to emit signals for the purpose of stopping the reels. However, Kimura clearly fails to disclose or

³ Office Action of November 22, 2004, page 5, first paragraph.

⁴ See for example the present specification at page 4, lines 8-11.

⁵ See also for example the present specification at page 8, line 12 to page 9, line 2, page 12, line 10 to page 13, line 20.

suggest the backlight set in a front side display unit to light up symbols displayed by the variable display unit.

With respect to the reliance on the teachings in Takemoto in the Office Action, applicants note Takemoto further teaches a liquid crystal display unit 20, i.e. a front side display unit, that contains a backlight 23 behind a display part 110.⁶ However, Takemoto fails to disclose that the backlight 23 is set in an end portion of the liquid crystal display unit 20. In the gaming machine of Takemoto the backlight 23 is set behind the display parts 110 so that a player can view symbols 24 because both the symbols 24 and the images 36 (blinking frame displays) are displayed on the display parts 110.

In comparison with Takemoto, in the above-noted non-limiting example of the present invention in Figures 2, 3, and 36, the cold cathode fluorescent tube 2e is set behind the display unit 5, and thereby a player cannot view a part of the symbols because the part of the symbols, which is displayed on the three spinning wheels 3L, 3C, and 3R disposed behind the display unit 5, hides behind the cold cathode fluorescent lamp 2e.

In view of these foregoing comments, applicants respectfully submit each of amended independent claims 1, 5, 9, and 13, and the claims dependent therefrom, which each recite a backlight set in an end portion of the front side display unit, clearly distinguish over Kimura, and further in view of any teachings in Takemoto.

With respect to the further rejection of claims 9 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Kimura in view of Okada '118, that rejection is even further traversed by the present response. First, Okada '118 does not overcome the above-noted deficiencies in Kimura. Further, Okada '118 was not filed prior to the present application and thus Okada '118 does not properly qualify as prior art with respect to the present application. Thus, the outstanding rejection based on Okada '118 is further traversed.

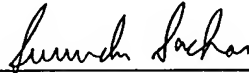
⁶ Takemoto at column 13, lines 29-33 and Figure 11.

In view of these foregoing comments, applicants respectfully submit the claims as currently written distinguish over the applied art.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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